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Collection de Documents pour l'Histoire Religieuse et Littéraire du Moyen Age :

Tome I. *Speculum Perfectionis, seu Sancti Francisci Assisiensis Legenda Antiquissima*. Nunc primum integre edidit PAUL SABATIER. (Paris : Fischbacher. 1898. Pp. ccxiv, 376.)

Tome II. *Fratris Francisci Bartholi de Assisio Tractatus de Indulgentia S. Mariae de Portiuncula*. Nunc primum integre edidit PAUL SABATIER. (Paris : Fischbacher. 1900. Pp. clxxxiv, 204.)

IN the first of these volumes, Sabatier prints a document which he argues is not only the oldest biography of Francis of Assisi, but also the one in which the character of the saint is portrayed most vigorously and poetically. He maintains that it was written by Brother Leo, less than a year after the death of St. Francis, and was finished May 11, 1227, at Portiuncula. He is especially interested in it because it is almost identical with the document which he reconstructed by internal criticism from the *Speculum Vitae* of 1509 and which he used as one of the sources for his *Life of St. Francis*. The document, as he reconstructed it by internal evidence, contained 118 chapters. Of these, 116 are in the actual *Speculum Perfectionis*, which contains in addition 8 more. Sabatier may well be pleased with such a proof of the soundness of his method in internal criticism. It is too early as yet to pronounce a judgment upon his claims as to the date, authenticity and authorship. His arguments have been controverted by some of the ablest specialists, and as yet there is no unanimity of opinion.

In the second volume, in addition to the treatise of Bartholus, Sabatier prints the more ancient sources for the history of the famous indulgence of the Portiuncula. In the *Life of St. Francis*, Sabatier wrote : "With the patience of four Benedictines (of the best days) we should doubtless be able to find our way in the medley of documents, more or less corrupted, from which it comes to us, and little by little we might find the starting-point of this dream in a friar who sees blinded humanity kneeling around Portiuncula to recover sight." This is a task that he has undertaken. In his laborious and loving study he has been led to change his opinion as to the origin of the indulgence. When he wrote the *Life*, he believed that the indulgence had "no direct connection with the history of St. Francis." On p. 444 of the English translation his opinion was stated even more positively. "Did Francis ask this indulgence and did Honorius III. grant it? Merely to reduce it to these simple proportions is to be brought to answer it with a categorical No."

The study of the earliest documents has led him to change this opinion, and in his zeal for truth he does not hesitate to confess what he believes to have been his error. A brief summary cannot do justice to his point of view, and can merely indicate the chief outlines of his

discussion. He controverts the argument of the "improbability in representing Francis, a declared opponent of privileges and the chief of an order just founded, as imploring from the Holy See an exorbitant favor," by the argument that "this indulgence is not a privilege, it is an act of love on the part of the sovereign pontiff for the members of the church. Neither the Chapel of the Portiuncula nor the Minorites were to receive the slightest profit from it." The argument from the silence, with regard to the indulgence, observed by the earliest biographers of St. Francis he thinks is no longer tenable. The *Legend of the Three Companions* published by Marcellino da Civezza and Teofilo Domenichelli is, as they argue, one of the earliest and most authentic sources, and this document is explicit on the subject of the indulgence. As the authenticity of this biography is questioned, Sabatier does not care to press this point, but turns to the consideration of the traditional biographies. He argues that the various authors have copied from one another, and that we have, properly speaking, only two biographies: one by Tommaso da Celano, the other by the Three Companions. The latter cannot be said to have made no mention of the indulgence, because we do not possess their work in its primitive form. The portions which have been lost may have contained a full statement as to the origin of this indulgence. Tommaso da Celano would not have been permitted by Gregory IX. to speak of the indulgence, as this pope regarded it "as indiscreet and dangerous." But the silence of the earlier biographies is "more apparent than real." "Without the indulgence, the chapters which they all consecrate to chanting the glories of the little sanctuary of Portiuncula appear . . . inexplicable." This is merely a bald summary of his arguments, stated as far as possible in his own words, but very greatly abridged.

To the present reviewer they seem far from conclusive. In fact, Sabatier does not seem wholly ingenuous in neglecting what is (as has been pointed out by Mr. Lea in his *History of Confession and Indulgences*, III. 238) the strongest argument against the genuineness of the legend. "Tommaso da Celano expressly tells us that no layman was allowed to enter it [the church of the Portiuncula], and this injunction is crystallized in the legend that when Piero da Catania, whom St. Francis had put at the head of the Order, died and was buried in the Portiuncula, and, coruscating in miracles, brought multitudes of worshippers to it, Francis, on returning to Assisi, went to his tomb and addressed him: 'Brother Peter, in life you were always obedient to me; as, through your miracles, we are pestered by laymen, you must obey me in death. I therefore order you on your obedience to cease from the miracles through which we are troubled by laymen.'" Other arguments which Sabatier has not answered are set forth in Mr. Lea's work, as well as elsewhere.

In conclusion it is hardly necessary to say that both of these volumes are models, in most respects, of critical scholarship. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Sabatier for the information which he has made ac-

cessible about the early history of the Franciscan Order and its chief members, for the scholarly editions of new texts, and for the indefatigable zeal with which he has labored on even the most minute points.

Histoire de la Marine Française. Vol. II. *La Guerre de Cent Ans; Révolution Maritime.* Par CHARLES DE LA RONCIÈRE. (Paris : Plon, Nourit and Co. 1900. Pp. 560.)

M. DE LA RONCIÈRE'S new volume is devoted mainly to the Hundred Years' War, but with regret it must be said at once that one rises from the perusal of it with little more knowledge of the effect of naval action upon the course of that long struggle than one had when one began. Facts it is true are lavished upon us with a profusion that tells of infinite labor and an unsurpassed enthusiasm for research. But facts and research alone will not make a naval history. Rather for the bulk of readers do they tend by themselves to deepen the obscurity that hangs round an obscure subject. Without some sustained attempt to correlate the apparently disconnected events, to deduce from them some kind of principles, to explain their bearing on the development of naval science, and their general place in the broad progression of the war, such a work sinks to the position of a chronicle. It cannot be called a history. Yet M. de la Roncière almost chokes his subject with ill-digested facts. He spares us nothing, no matter how minute and how little germane to the matter in hand. He can scarcely draw breath for a moment to help us get our bearings, and even when he does his exposition is sometimes far from luminous and not always sound. Nor has he the excuse that his main purpose is to rescue from oblivion the exploits of the French marine. For the greater part of his story is not concerned with the French marine at all, but is devoted to the exploits of Spanish, Italian, and other squadrons hired by the French government or with which French officers or French ships were serving. Not that such matters should not find a place in a history of the French navy, for therein lies its universal interest and importance. As M. de la Roncière himself has so ably pointed out, France throughout the Middle Ages was the focus of the naval art. Every existing influence was brought directly to bear upon its navy and left its mark. To explain the French navy all these influences must be followed and understood. A real history of the French navy would be also a real history of the art of war by sea. Around no other marine could the work be so artistically and logically arranged. But of this broad fact, which in his first volume M. de la Roncière seemed about to handle with so much skill, his grip grows looser as he proceeds and we feel with genuine disappointment that a great opportunity is being missed.

Nor can our reluctant fault-finding stop here. For so far from carrying further our knowledge of the strategy, tactics and material of medieval navies, he leaves it behind the point it has already reached, and even tends to cover up what other workers to some extent have laid bare. The antiquary's lack of interest in the living professional aspect of the